

Media, PA – On Monday, July 7, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA – 07) received a perfect 100 % scorecard from PennEnvironment for his record on environmental voting. One of the Congressman's pillars of national security is energy/environment, and the reception of this scorecard today complements his efforts in that arena. He previously received a 100 percent marking for his work on the environment from the League of Conservation Voters. — "I'm honored that PennEnvironment has recognized my strong support—as evidenced by my voting record—for the environment. This is especially relevant in light of our national energy crisis, which has environmental implications," said Congressman Sestak, who was given the scorecard by PennEnvironment Director David Masur. "Energy and the environment compose one pillar of my national security platform, as dependence on foreign oil hampers our national security by hindering our economic and environmental security. By protecting our environment and securing alternative energy sources, we necessarily bolster our overall national security."

Congressman Sestak also took advantage of the opportunity to announce the approval through the House Appropriations Committee of \$250,000 for the beginning of a District-wide watershed management project to enhance environmental infrastructure to Pennsylvania streams in Delaware County and portions of Chester and Montgomery counties, including, but not exclusive to, the Perkiomen Creek, Brandywine and Valley Creek Watersheds and Ridley Creek.

After today's presentation, Congressman Sestak continued his efforts to address watershed management when he met with members of a Pennsylvania Environmental Advisory Council (EAC), who are part of a wider EAC network made up of small groups across Pennsylvania that advises municipalities on environmental issues. EACs are authorized to identify environmental problems, recommend solutions, conduct site visits and prepare reports for municipal officials. Topics of discussion included stormwater runoff and how to find a comprehensive solution to watershed management problems.

Since taking office, the Congressman has made a concerted effort to gather information on this issue, meeting with a variety of groups. He has spoken with a watershed specialist for the Delaware County Conservation District about existing plans, an expert in flood plain mapping from Temple University regarding the problems caused by outdated mapping of the region's watersheds, and numerous individual watershed organizations. In addition, the Congressman held a joint meeting with many local watershed groups and the Army Corps of Engineers to review the Corps' proposal for a comprehensive approach for a district-wide watershed management plan.

Congressman Sestak has strongly advocated a comprehensive solution to solve the many problems facing area watersheds, including the extensive flooding that this area has experienced from storms in recent years and pollution of local waterways, not only from companies that dump contaminants, but also from indirect runoff of pollutants such as oil from streets, and fertilizer and herbicides from lawns. This comprehensive plan involves the environmental restoration of the region's waterways while addressing other systems such as culverts and sewer systems.

Congressman Sestak has worked to fund the necessary first step in this process, the Reconnaissance Study, which would use existing information to identify the problems, needs and opportunities regarding water resources in the study area. This step would be followed by a detailed data collection an evaluation and formulation of several alternative plans, and a report making specific recommendations to Congress.

At the event, Congressman Sestak also spoke about his near-, mid-, and long-term plan to address out national energy crisis. He has noted that while there are 68 million acres available for drilling in the United States, we cannot just drill our way out of this problem. In the short-term, we must combat unwarranted speculation on financial markets. This speculation has increased five-fold in the last five years, equal to the increase in demand by China over this time period. Congressman Sestak voted for two bills to both curb speculation and ensure that companies do not engage in price gouging. Second, we need to increase the value of our currency by working under a pay-as-you-go government to bring down our national debt and restore confidence in the dollar. If we increase the value of the dollar by just 10 percent, experts say we can lower the price of oil by 10-40 percent. Third, it is our responsibility to conserve energy use by promoting options for increased efficiency, such as energy-efficient light bulbs and public transportation.

In the mid and long term, but starting now, we must transition to a clean energy economy, including supporting sequestration of coal and advocating a responsible use of nuclear power once we have resolved the dispute over waste repositories in Yucca Mountain.

The Congressman has also pushed for eliminating \$16.1 billion of tax benefits for oil and gas companies and using the money to invest in alternative energy, and he helped pass the Renewable Energy and Job Creation Act which includes \$18 billion in tax incentives for renewable energy. By promoting research and use of cellulosic and switchgrass ethanol, wind and solar power, geothermal and other renewables and plug-in hybrid vehicles – among much more– we can create viable energy alternative that reduce our reliance on fossil fuels.

The Congressman has supported numerous pieces of legislation that enhance our environmental and energy security. Following is a selection of these bills.

The Congressman recently supported The Energy Independence and Security Act (H.R. 6). With the passage of this bill, Congress took a bold step towards reducing America's dependence on foreign oil and strengthening our national security, lowering energy costs, increasing America's supply of home-grown renewable energy, investing in cutting-edge research on renewable fuels, and reducing harmful pollutants to the environment. This legislation builds upon the New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 3221 and H.R. 2776) passed this summer. It is a fiscally-responsible legislation, under a "pay-as-you-go" government, that will close tax loopholes that have allowed big oil companies to skirt paying their taxes.

The Congressman also supported The Safe Climate Act (H.R. 1590), which aims to aggressively reduce carbon emissions and begins to address the devastation caused to our environment by global warming. This bill amends the Clean Air Act to direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to decrease greenhouse gas emissions each year from 2010-2050 by 2% and provide regulations requiring reductions to meet such targets. The bill achieves these targets through a flexible economy-wide cap and trade program for greenhouse emissions, along with measures to advance technology and reduce emissions through renewable energy, energy efficiency, and cleaner cars.

Furthermore, he voted for The Climate Stewardship Act of 2007 (H.R. 620), which accelerates the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States by establishing a market driven system of greenhouse gas tradeable allowances that will limit greenhouse gas emission in the United States. It also requires the EPA to establish a National Greenhouse Gas Database and establishes the Climate Change Credit Corporation (CCCC) to receive, manage, buy, and sell tradeable allowances. In turn, this will help reduce dependence upon foreign oil, and ensure benefits to consumers from the trading in such allowances, and for other purposes. The Congressman has signed on as an original cosponsor of HR 1506, the Markey-Platts Fuel Economy Reform Act. This legislation will raise Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards for all cars and light trucks in the coming years. H.R. 1506, if passed, will raised CAFE standards to 27.5 mile per gallon (mpg) by 2012, 33 mpg by 2016, and 35 mpg by 2018. I believe this bill to be an important part of a smarter national energy policy by reducing our dependence on foreign oil sources.

Additionally, he supported H.R. 1716, The Green Energy Education Act, which authorizes the Secretary of Energy to contribute energy research and development funds to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship program to support graduate education related to such energy projects. It also authorizes the Secretary to contribute funds for advanced energy technology research and development for high performance buildings to the NSF for curriculum development to improve undergraduate or graduate interdisciplinary engineering and architecture education related to the design and construction of such buildings.

The Congressman also supported HR 632, the H-Prize Act of 2007, which Directs the Secretary of Energy to: (1) award competitive cash prizes biennially to advance the research, development, demonstration, and commercial application of hydrogen energy technologies; and (2) enter into an agreement with a private, nonprofit entity to administer the prize competitions. He is also a supporter of HR 1576, which will amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to make permanent the tax incentives that expire at the end of this year afforded to landowners who donate their land's development rights to local land trusts. The current tax incentives have been successful, and keeping these intact is important to our nation's environment and economic security.

The Congressman also made clear that energy and the environment have positive impacts on small businesses. For instance, legislation such as the Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2008 provides tax credits while investing in clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency. Furthermore, it pays for that investment by repealing unnecessary tax breaks to big energy companies. The bill extends and expands tax incentives for renewable electricity, energy and fuel, as well as for hybrid cars, and energy efficient homes, buildings, and appliances. By strengthening our renewable energy sector, the bill will help create the next generation of good-paying, green collar jobs and bring down energy prices in the long term.

Small businesses also benefit from provisions in the New Direction for Energy Independent, National Security and Consumer Protection Act (H.R. 3221), which authorizes programs to assist small businesses in the energy sector, establishing a new Renewable Fuel Capital Investment Pilot Program, to be run by the Small Business Administration (SBA), to provide loan guarantees and grants to newly-formed "renewable fuel investment companies." The bill also authorizes \$850 million annually in FY 2008 and FY 2009 for grants to public transportation agencies to reduce fares or increase services in order to promote ridership.

The Congressman sponsored a provision in that legislation authorizing grants to small business development centers to provide assistance for developing, marketing, or investing in energy-efficiency technology. The bill included \$150,000 to \$350,000 grants for SBDCs to provide support to smaller and medium-sized businesses to evaluate energy efficiency and "green" building opportunities, to secure financing to achieve energy efficiency or to construct green buildings, and to help these businesses improve overall environmental performance.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.